ACCOUNT

Of the LIFE, of

John ***********

Alias

Owen Syllavan,

Alias *John Livingſton*, alias *John Brown*, by which Names he ſtood indicted by the Grand Jury, and was found Guilty by the Supreme Seſſions for the City and County of NEW-YORK, for Counterfeiting and paſſing the current Bills of that Colony emitted in the Year 1737 : And was Executed on Monday the 10th Day of *May* 1756. Shewing what Manner of Life he led from his Infancy. Taken from his own Mouth.

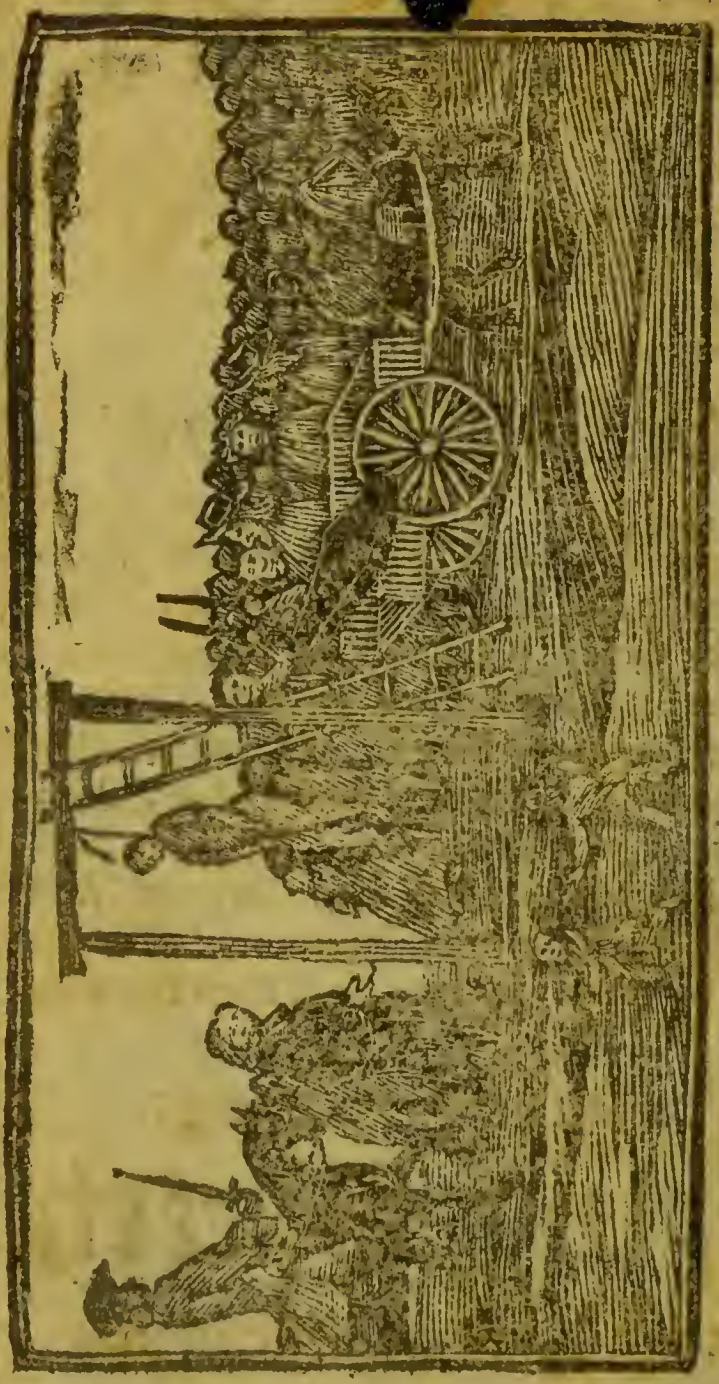
To which is added, HIS

Dying Speech

At the Place of Execution.

NEW-YORK: Printed.

BOSTON: Re-printed and Sold by *Green & Ruſſell*, at their Printing-Office near the Cuſtom-Houſe, and next to the Writing School in *Queen-Street*. 1756.



William Jennisons
Property Brookfield
In the

THE

LIFE of *John*, -------

Alias

Owen Syllavan, &c.

I WAS bred and born in the County of *Waxford* in *Ireland*, of Engliſh Parents near the Town of *Fedard*, and from my youth I was always in all kind of Miſchief; ſo that I never minded Father nor Mother, Siſter nor Brother; but went on in all Manner of Vice, till I came to the Age of eleven Years, or there-abouts; I was confined by my Parents in a Room, and fed upon Bread and Water for a conſiderable Time, and then I ſeemed to humble myſelf; till I again obtained my Liberty, and after that I was ten Times, worſe than I was before; ſo that my Parents was obliged to ſend me to another Place, ſome Diſtance from home to a School-Maſter, who my Parents gave ſtrict charge to keep me from Vice, and keep to my Learning.

And the firſt Night that I lodged there, I was called by an evil Spirit by my Chriſtian Name; *John*, *John*, *John*, *John*, and that for ſeveral Minutes together, to the Surpiſe of myſelf, and all the

the Family: and so continued for three or four Nights together, before there was any Notice taken of it; but the fourth Night my Master set up, and Read by me till Eleven o'Clock; and then the Spirit began to call again, *John, John, John*, and that every Minute, for sixty Times together by my Master's Watch; and that lasted so for three Months together. The Ministers from sundry Parishes came to set with me; as also sundry Persons, who always pray'd by me, and giving me all good Advice in their Power, begging and praying of me, to Repent. Then I began to fear GOD; and finding so many Hundreds of People that came to see me from far and near, who took pitty upon me. At last some of them concluded to take me to one of their Houses, which they did; as soon as it was eleven o'Clock, the Spirit began to call again, *why John! why John! why John!* it called so loud that the Windows shook, and every one in the House trembled for Fear, except myself. I was taken Sick about five or six Days, before the Spirit had done calling, and during my Sickness it called louder then before; and as I laid in Bed, there was something that seem'd to press me between my Shoulders with a Hand, but saw nothing.

So this continued till I was Removed to my Parents, who then took Campassion upon me; and to the best of my Knowledge I lay Sick, for about the same Time as the Spirit had called to me before, but not troubled with any more of that evil Spirit. So it pleased GOD to restore me to my former Health, and I went to School again; but fell from Good to Evil, by provoking my Parents

and

and giving ill Advice to others, ſuch as my Play-mates, &c. And when my Parents chaſtiſed me for my Faults, I look'd upon it as Tyranny, and told them ſeveral Times to exerciſe their Tyranny upon me. And when I was about thirteen Years of Age I deſerted from my Parents, and ſtroll'd away to a Place called *Bellaback*, near the Paſſage of *Waterford*, ſo coming down to the Water Side, there was a ſmall Boat ready to puſh off, and I deſired of them to take me aboard, which they refuſed and told me they was not going over the Ferry; but told me they was going to *Waterford*, I aſked of them to give me a Paſſage there, for I wanted to ſee my Aunt; ſo they aſked my Name, and I told my Name was *Owen Syllevan* which was a Lye, for it was there I changed my Name, and ſo they gave me my Paſſage to *Waterford*, and I ſtrol'd from Place to Place, till I came to the County of *Limerick*. There was a Gentleman Riding along, aſked me whoſe Son I was, I made anſwer I was born in *Dublin* and of poor Parentage, and that they were Dead, and I told him I was going to *Cork*, expecting to find ſome Relations, and told him my Name was *Owen Syllavan*.

The Gentleman told me if I would go and live with him, he would be my Friend and Relation too, with that I conſented and went with him to his Country-Seat, his Lady looking out of the Window, he with a ſmiling Countenance ſaid, I have brought you a pretty Boy to wait upon you, the Lady ſeemed to like me very well, and I gave them an Indenture to ſerve for ſeven Years, and ſo become my Lady's running Foot-Page. And was

train'd

train'd up to running, and ſerved them almoſt ſix Years, which pleaſed me better than Schooling; and in the ſixth Year of my Servitude, I ſeemed to be home ſick; and ſet a Reſolution if I ſhould be ſent of an Errand that way, I would make the beſt of my Way Home, which was about one 100 Miles: And ſoon after my Maſter wanted me to carry a Letter to a Gentleman, about twenty Miles diſtance. I embrac'd that Opportunity, delivered my Letter, but did not wait for any Anſwer; but went direct for *Waterford*, where I arrived the ſame Day, about four o'Clock in the Afternoon, which was ſeventy Miles. When I came to *Waterford*, I drank a Tumbler full of Wine, and being very Hot, I was taken with a Pluratick Pain, and lay Sick there for ſome Time; although I was then about thirty Miles from my Father's Houſe, I would not let myſelf be known; but told the People, that my Errand was as far as *Waxford* Town. After I got well I went down to the Wharf, where I ſaw ſeveral Paſſengers going on Board of a Veſſel bound for *Boſton*, in *New-England*; ſo I goes up to the Captain, and agrees with him for my Paſſage; and Bound my ſelf for four Years, and in a few Days ſet Sail for *Boſton*; where we arrived in about nine Weeks: but having many Souls on Board, we was very ſcant of Proviſion. I agreed with the Captain to ſerve him three Years more, for as many Biſcuit as I could Eat, during the running of three Glaſſes, which cauſed the Captain to burſt into a Laughter, and ſo conſented to it: but I was to have no Water during the Time. After our Arrival at *Boſton*, I told the Captain I had as ſoon be Sold for ſeven

Years,

Years, as for a Day ; ſince I muſt be Sold, and to get for me as much as he could. And he Sold me to one Captain *Gillmore*, living about twenty-four Hours Sail to the Eaſtward of *Boſton*, to a Place called St. *George*'s-*River*. I ſerved that Gentleman two Years and an half, in chopping of Wood and clearing of Land ; and hearing of a *French* War, my Maſter and all the Family Removed to *Boſton*, except my ſelf ; my Maſter Sold the Remainder of my Time to Captain *Bradbery*, who I ſerved two Years, as a Soldier, and proved faithful to my King and Country.

And after that, contrary to my Maſter's Will, I liſted under Captain *Waldo*, in General *Shirley*'s Regiment of Foot, for *Cape-Breton*, and after that, I was Drafted into Captain *Gordon*'s Company of Grenadiers, and took great Delight in the Diſcipline, which pleaſed my Officers exceedingly, and they was pleaſed to put me chief Armourer of the Regiment ; and ſome Time after, they thought proper that I ſhould Number and Engrave the Arms of the Regiment belonging to Governor *Shirley*, as alſo Sir *William Pepperrell*'s Regiment's Arms, and ſo continued as Armourer for two Years ; then I unhappily Married a Wife, which proved a Torment to me, and made my Life uncomfortable ; and ſhe was given to take a Cup too much, and I for my Part took to the ſame ; and through her aggravating Tongue, neglecting my Buſineſs, I was turned out, and was obliged to do private duty again as a common Soldier. And after I was off Duty, I took and ſet myſelf up as a Silverſmith, and followed Engraving and Seal-Cutting ;

Cutting ; and as I was Moulding, I caſt a *Spaniſh* Dollar amongſt the reſt of my Work and laid it down on the Work-Bench, ſo that I did not care who ſaw it ; and by an ill-minded Man who made it his Buſineſs to inform againſt me, I was taken up for the ſame and Try'd by a General Court-Marſhal ; I pleaded Guilty, and by the Dollar's being good Silver was acquitted, and ſome Time after, I quarrel'd with a brother Soldier, and he complain'd to his Officer about it, and for that Crime I receiv'd Fifty Stripes ; and in a ſhort Time after the Regiment was broke, I came to *Boſton*, and ſat up to Engraving ; and in that Time there came two Men who perſwaded me to Engrave them a Plate for *New-Hampſhire* Money, which I did, and they Rewarded me well for it. I thought it was an eaſy Way of getting Money, ſo I Counterfeited the *Boſton* Bills of Credit ; but never made none above *Forty Shillings*. Soon after, my Wife and I having differed together, ſhe cry'd out Hey, you Forty Thouſand Money-Maker, which was heard by ſome of the Neighbours, who made a complaint againſt me ; for which I was Apprehended, and ſtood Tryal, and was acquitted, by Reaſon they had no Law for that Money : The Attorney-General deſired that I ſhould be continued in Cuſtody till next Court, or give Bail for my Appearance ; the next Seſſions they found a Bill againſt me for Forgery, and was found Guilty, for which I ſtood two Hours in the Pillory and received Twenty Laſhes at the public Whipping-Poſt ; during my Confinement, I engraved three ſorts of Plates, two of *New-Hampſhire* Money, and one for *Boſton* Currency, and for want of a Rolling

Preſs,

Preſs, ſtruck it off by Hand, ſign'd it in Goal and gave it out by Quantities to my Accomplices, and ſome Time afterwards, being in low Circumſtances, two Gentlemen came and paid my Bill of Coſts, and took me out of Goal; ſoon after I came out of Confinement, the *New-Hampſhire* Money was found out to be falſe, (that is the firſt Money that I Engraved for the Gentlemen,) one of them turned King's Evidence and ſwore againſt me for engraving the Plate, and againſt his Confederate; but both got clear by Swearing it upon me; for my Part I made my Eſcape and got into *Rhode-Iſland* Government, where I met with a Man who I had known in *Cape-Breton*, where I laid concealed for ſome Time; he and ſundry more came to me, and deſired of me, and intreated of me to cut them a Plate, which I did and ſtruck off *Twelve Thouſand Pounds*, and divided the Money amongſt them, as I thought proper; and in one Day I changed and paſt about *Sixteen Hundred Pounds*, and got good Money for it; and coming through the Town of *Providence* one of my Accomplices Wives was taken up for Counterfeiting Money. I told her before ſhe ſhould Swear, that ſhe might ſay ſhe had the Money from me; and ſhe would never have been taken up, if ſhe had not taken a Bill clandeſtinely and Sign'd it herſelf.

My Partner *Nicholas Stephens* and I, rid about three Miles out of Town, and divided the good Money we had by us, and then parted; he Rid in Town and there gave himſelf up as an Evidence, in behalf of King and Country, and they confin'd him to Goal; and he brought in ſeven or eight

more, who all pleaded not Guilty and ſwore they had the Money of me, and received it for good Money in Trading; and in about a Week after, I was taken and confin'd to Goal: I was brought to Examination and pleaded Guilty, and ſaid that thoſe People that was in Goal I had Cheated in Trading. I had hid about *Four Thouſand Pounds*, which the Authority demanded of me; I told them that I would not deliver the Money till they would deliver, and Diſcharge the Innocent now Confin'd; and after they were Diſcharged, I was brought out under a Guard and delivered up the Money; ſoon after that, I was brought to Tryal and found Guilty; and was Branded in both Cheeks with the Letter R. and Cropt in both my Ears, ſo I was returned to Cuſtody again. I broke out of Goal and ſaw *Nicholas Stephens* Cropt and Branded, the High Sheriff of *Providence* came to me, and deſired of me to return to Priſon, for he ſaid he ſhould looſe his Place; with that I went very quietly, and ſoon after, on a Monday I broke out of Goal and went to a Huſking Frolick about three Miles out of Town, and differ'd with the Company, and got almoſt Kill'd, and the next Morning returned to my old Priſon again, then I was put in ſtrong Irons and confined very cloſe; but I ſoon found Means to break out again; although they purſu'd me very cloſe, ſent Poſt haſte after me, and did all they could to Apprehend me; but all in vain, till I came to *Dutcheſs* County, in the Province of *New-York*; and going from Houſe to Houſe, there was a Perſon that knew me, and aſked if my Name was not *Syllavan*? No, ſaid I, you are miſtaken in the Perſon my Friend; and ſo I went off for fear

he

he would betray me ; which he did, by deſcribing my Viſage and Apparel, and ſaid, he was ſure it was *Syllavan* the Money-Maker.

Then I provided my ſelf with a ſecret retreating Place, at the Side of a Swamp ; in a large unfrequented Wood : but hearing that ſome of my Accomplices were taken, and expecting they would betray me, or diſcover my Habitation. I therefore abandoned it, and fled to the Mountains, where I concealed my ſelf ſeven Days ; till being compel'd by Hunger, I ventured to a Houſe of my Acquaintance, hoping they would favour my Concealment ; and having cut a Plank in the Floor of the Houſe, I dig'd a Cavity under the Hearth, and had a Fire-place, the Smoke of which iſſu'd by a Vent into the Chimney above ; I had not been long conceal'd there, before the Houſe was ſurrounded by ſeveral Men : ſo I ſuffer'd myſelf to be taken, and ſurrender'd to them. Firſt I was carried to *New-Haven* Goal, and afterwards removed to *New-York*.

During my ſtay in *Dutcheſs* County, I made large Sums of *Rhode-Iſland* Money, of ſix Aſſortments, and of the *New-Hampſhire* Currency *ten or twelve Thouſand Pounds*, and left the Plates with my Accomplices ; of *Connecticut* Money, I made three Sorts, and printed off about *three Thouſand Pounds*, and lef the Plates with my Accomplicies ; of *New-York* Currency four Sorts, and had four different Sett of Accomplices ; and there was four Sorts Counterfeited by my Accomplices, which I had no Hand in at all ; and all of the new Currency, with the following Signers Names to it,

viz.

viz. *De Lancey*, *Depuyſter*, and *Livingſton*. All my Accomplices deſerv'd the Gallows, as well as myſelf; but I will not betray them, or be guilty of ſhedding their Blood.

And then turning to the Spectators, ſaid, well Gentlemen, *You may all take Warning by me, and look out for the King of Terrors*; *and told the Sheriff that he muſt needs confeſs, that he was not willing to die. Then looking about him, ſaid, I ſee none of my Accomplices here*; *but I hope they will burn and deſtroy all the Money, Plates and Accoutrements, that they have by them, and that they may not die on a Tree as I do. Then call'd to the Executioner and ſaid, don't pull the Rope ſo tight, it is hard for a Man to die in cold Blood: after which he cried out* O good GOD! O good GOD! *have Mercy on my Soul! then ſaid the Lord's Prayer. Juſt as he was turn'd off the Cart, he cry'd,* LORD have Mercy on my Soul.

FINIS.